
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
FAMILY INDEPENDENCE
FOOD STAMPS**

TANF or PaS Reference

CFR 273.21(f)

Section: **FS-666-5**

CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Adding or Removing a Member

Different
Chap.II, Sec. D

WHEN A NEW MEMBER MOVES INTO THE HOUSEHOLD

Determine eligibility and benefit level by treating both the new member's and the participating household's assets and gross income prospectively.

Same
Chap. II, Sec A

NOTE: An individual cannot participate as a member of more than one household in any month - this includes those who move in with someone else and those who establish their own household.

Same
Chap. I, Sec. B

Determine the household's benefits for next month; if greater than the amount authorized for the report month, authorize supplemental benefits which represent the difference between the two months. Increased benefits shall be made effective for the month following the report month and the supplemental allotment shall be authorized not later than five days after the day the change was reported.

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
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TANF or PaS Reference

CFR 273.21(f)

Section: **FS-666-5**

CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Adding or Removing a Member

Same
Chap. I, Sec. B

WHEN A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER LEAVES, REMOVE HIM

Different
Chap. I, Sec. C

Do not consider this member's income and assets for either eligibility or benefits. No adverse action period is required if reported via redetermination.

Different
Chap I, Sec. B

NOTE: If any responsible household member signs a statement waiving the right to advance notice, the action will be taken immediately.

Different
Chap. II, Sec. D

FOR THE REMAINING HOUSEHOLD

Determine the household's benefits for next month. If greater than the amount authorized for the report month, authorize supplemental benefits which represent the difference between the two months. Increased benefits shall be made effective for the month following the report month, and a supplemental allotment shall be authorized not later than five (5) days after the change was reported.

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
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TANF or PaS: I Med: 1420, 1521

CFR 273.12

Section: **FS-666-6**

CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Changes during the certification period

Different
Chapter I

GENERAL RULE - Certified households must report certain changes in income, assets and other circumstances within ten days of the date it becomes known to the household. The agency shall take action no later than 10 days from the date the change is reported.

The following changes must be reported:

1. Changes in the sources of income.
2. Changes of more than \$25 in gross monthly income. This includes changes in excluded income which could result in changes in subsidized shelter amounts. Changes in TANF or PaS benefits and child support pass-through and gap-payments do not have to be reported.
3. Changes in household composition.

Same
Chapter I

NOTE: An individual cannot participate as a member of more than one household in any month - this includes those who move in with someone else and those who establish their own household even when the advance notice requirement prevents the individual from being removed from the prior household before the next allotment is issued. If the departing person reports the change for the first household and would like to receive food stamps in a second household, this individual should be encouraged to sign a statement reporting the changed information and requesting that the change take affect immediately to avoid not getting food stamps in the next month.

4. Changes in residence and any resulting change in shelter costs.
5. The acquisition of a licensed vehicle not totally exempt under FS 333-3.
6. When cash, stocks, bonds, and money in financial institution reach or exceed \$2000.
7. Changes in the legal obligation to pay child support.

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TANF or PaS: I Med: 1420, 1521

CFR 273.12

Section: **FS-666-6**

CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Changes during the certification period

Households which are applying for initial or re-certification must report all changes related to eligibility and benefits at the certification interview. Any of the above changes which occur after the interview but before the date of the notice of eligibility must be reported within 10 days of the date of the notice.

Same
Chap I

Advance notice of adverse action is required when the change results in a reduction or termination of benefits within the certification period.

Different
Chap. I

NOTE: If any responsible member provides information in writing, requests that the action take effect immediately, and signs that statement, the action will be taken immediately.

Same
Chap. IV

- I. All factors of the certification period shall be determined prospectively.
 - A. If ineligible, close the case and give advance notice of adverse action.

EXCEPTION: If the household is expected to be ineligible for only one month, suspend the case and give advance notice of adverse action.

- B. If eligible, benefit level shall be determined based upon anticipated income and circumstances.
- C. If the change results in decreased benefits, give advance notice of adverse action and decrease the benefits.
- D. If the change results in increased benefits or no change in benefits, take necessary action and notify the client. Increased benefits shall be made effective for the month following the report month in which the change is reported.

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TANF or PaS Reference

CFR 273.12

Section: **FS-666-6**

CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Changes during the certification period

Different

II. State Mandated Supplements

- A. When a change **is reported by the household**, and it would have resulted in a benefit increase for the month in which it is reported had the allotment not already been authorized, a supplemental allotment shall be issued. The amount shall be calculated based upon the difference between the amount already authorized and the amount the household would have received based upon the circumstances in the month the change is reported.

NOTE: This means that when a change is reported by the household during the certification period, a determination of whether or not a supplement is required must be made based solely on the circumstances in the month in which the change is reported. It is conceivable that a reported change could result in a decrease in next month's benefits and a supplement for this month.

- B. Some examples are:

1. TANF or PaS mother and one child with no income other than TANF or PaS reports an additional child in March. April's TANF or PaS is increased but the TANF or PaS supplement date is believed to be April. The Food Stamp supplement for March would be based on a household of three and the March TANF or PaS check amount which was for two. April's Food Stamp benefit would be based on a household of three and the anticipated April TANF or PaS benefits which will be for three. If the TANF or PaS supplement will be received in March it would be counted in the calculation of the food stamp supplement.
2. In March a Food Stamp household of four reports the loss of the member who was the sole source of income. Since the member has already participated, his income cannot be removed until April. March benefits will be based upon a household of four and the income of each member and the March circumstances of the remaining household members. There would be no supplement for March, and April benefits would be based upon a household of three; its income, and circumstances.

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TANF or PaS Reference

CFR 273.12

Section: **FS-666-6**

CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Changes during the certification period

3. A Food Stamp household of five reports early in March that working member is laid off; will receive 1 pay check and one UIB check in March. Supplement is based upon a household of five, the total of the earnings plus the one UIB check, and the other March circumstances unless otherwise indicated. April benefits shall be based upon household anticipated circumstances.
 4. A Household reports in May that a working member will be laid off one day in May. Full time work will resume in June. The May supplement is based upon one day loss of pay, household composition and circumstances in May. June benefits will be the same as May's regular allotment, provided no other changes are anticipated.
- C. Under no circumstances should a supplemental allotment be calculated based simply upon the difference between "this month's allotment compared to next month's allotment".
- D. Supplements shall be authorized not later than 5 days after the change is reported. Households are entitled to the supplement whether or not the change is reported within 10 days of its occurrence. They are also entitled to the supplement when the change is reported during the redetermination process.

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TANF or PaS Reference

CFR 273.12(e)

Section: **FS-666-7**

CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Mass Changes

Same
Chap. I, Sec. C,
page 1

GENERAL RULE - Certain changes are initiated by the State or Federal government which may affect all or most of the caseload. These changes include, but are not limited to:

1. adjustments in the Thrifty Food Plan.
2. adjustments in the standard deduction.
3. adjustments in the shelter/dependent care deduction.
4. adjustments in the income eligibility standards.
5. periodic adjustments to TANF or PaS payments.

Advance notice of adverse action is not required when a household's benefits are reduced or terminated as a result of a mass change. The household shall receive adequate notice not later than five days before benefits would normally be received.

***EXCEPTION:** Adverse actions resulting from computer to computer matching concerning mass changes to Federal benefits, other than Social Security and SSI, require an advance notice of 30 days.

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TANF/PaS: I

Med: 1500

CFR 273.10 (f)

Section: **FS-666-8**

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CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Certification Periods

GENERAL RULE - Establish a definite period of time which the household shall be eligible to receive food stamps. At the expiration of each certification period entitlement to benefits ends. At initial application the first month of the certification period shall be the month of application. Certification periods shall conform to calendar months and shall not be more than twelve (12) months with the exception of certain households meeting the criteria listed at #3 below.

NOTE: Households receiving both TANF/PaS and Food Stamps shall be assigned a common re-determination period based upon TANF/PaS criteria. Categorically eligible TANF/PaS households shall have their food stamps terminated for failure to complete a re-determination even though they continue to receive TANF/PaS or SSI benefits. When TANF/PaS benefits are terminated within the certification period, and the agency does not have sufficient information to determine the effect upon food stamp eligibility and benefit level, the following actions shall be taken:

Wait until it is certain that the TANF/PaS benefits will be closed for at least one month. (check selection date).

Unless the certification period expires by the end of the following month, send a notice of expiration which informs the household that its certification period will expire at the end of the month following the month the notice of expiration is being sent, and that its certification period is expiring because of changes in its circumstances which may affect its food stamp eligibility and benefit level.

SHORTENING A CERTIFICATION PERIOD

There are only two basic instances when the state can shorten a certification period:

1. When the state received information which indicates the household is ineligible,
or
2. When the household does not cooperate in clarifying its circumstances.

A contact letter must be sent giving ten (10) days to respond. If the household does not respond, or responds and *refuses* to provide information, a notice of adverse action is to be sent for termination.

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TANF/PaS: I

Med: 1500

CFR 273.10 (f)

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CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

LENGTHENING A CERTIFICATION PERIOD

Certification periods may be lengthened to coincide with TANF/PaS or medical assistance certification periods. The twelve (12) and twenty four (24) month rule remains in effect.

1. Households shall be assigned the longest certification periods possible based upon the predictability of the household's circumstances.

NOTE: Except for categorically eligible TANF/PaS households, households in which all members are elderly, and households whose primary source of income is from predictable self employment income, households eligible for a child support deduction that have no record of regular child support payments shall be certified for no more than three (3) months; households with a record of regular payments that are expected to continue payments of the same amount and frequency shall be certified for no more than six (6) months.

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TANF/PaS: I Med: 1550

CFR 273.10 (f)

Section: **FS-666-8**

CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Certification Periods

2. Households consisting entirely of unemployable or elderly persons with very stable unearned income shall be certified for twelve (12) months provided other household circumstances are expected to remain stable.
3. Households with no earned income and consisting entirely of members age 60 or older, or whose only income is SSI, Social Security Disability benefits, or a combination of SSI and Social Security Disability benefits shall be certified for twenty-four (24) months provided other household circumstances are expected to remain stable.

NOTE: These households will be sent a change report form in the twelfth month of the certification period. The purpose of this form is to remind households of the change reporting requirements. The household is not expected to return the form unless and until a reportable change occurs.

4. Households whose primary source of income is from self-employment may be certified for twelve (12) months provided income can be readily predicted, the household's circumstances are not likely to change, and there is no other earned income being received.
5. When the household's only income is stable unearned income and no major changes in unearned income, deductions or household composition are anticipated, it may be certified for six (6) months.
6. When the household has earned income and no major changes in deductions, household composition, or sources of income are anticipated, it shall be certified for three months.
7. Households eligible for a certification period of three (3) months or less may have their certification period increased by one (1) month if the certification process is completed after the 15th day of the month of application and the household's circumstances warrant the one (1) month extension, and earned income is not anticipated to be received.
8. When the household cannot reasonably anticipate what its circumstances will be in the near future the certification period shall be one (1) or two (2) months, as appropriate. This includes households eligible only because of GA categorical eligibility (General Assistance is given for 30 days or less; General Assistance beyond that requires another application).

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TANF or PaS Reference

CFR 273.10, 273.14

Section: **FS-666-9**

CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Different
Chapter I

Redeterminations

GENERAL RULE - The right to participate ends with the last day of the certification period. Each household shall be provided a notice of expiration by the beginning of the last month of certification. Benefits shall not be continued beyond the certification period, unless eligibility has been redetermined. To be redetermined, the household must submit a signed form and be interviewed face-to-face or by telephone, if an interview is required (see FS-222-4 regarding the interview requirement). Advance notice of adverse action is not required when benefits change from one certification period to another.

Timely Redetermination

If the household timely files the recertification form, attends any required interview scheduled on or after the date the form was timely filed, and submits all necessary verification within the agency's time frame, the agency shall approve or deny the recertification and notify the household of its determination by the end of the household's current certification period. In addition, the agency shall provide the household an opportunity to participate by its normal issuance cycle in the month following the end of its current certification period.

To be considered timely filed, the agency must receive the household's recertification form by the 15th day of the last month of the certification period.

When an interview is required, the agency shall schedule the interview on or after the date the application was timely filed if the interview has not been previously scheduled.

When any required verification is requested, the household must be allowed at least 10 calendar days to provide this in order to ensure its rights to uninterrupted benefits.

Any eligible household not determined eligible in sufficient time to participate by its normal issuance cycle, due to the time period allowed for submitting any missing verification, shall receive an opportunity to participate within 5 working days after the household supplies the missing verification.

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TANF or PaS: I Med: 1550

CFR 273.10, 273.14

Section: **FS-666-9**

CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Different
Chapter I

Redeterminations

Untimely Redetermination

The household shall lose its right to uninterrupted benefits for failure to file the recertification form by the 15th day of the last month of the certification period, attend any required interview scheduled on or after the 15th day of the last month of the certification period, or to submit all necessary verification within the time frame established by the agency as long as the time frame elapses after the 15th day of the last month of the certification period.

If the household loses its right to uninterrupted benefits due to such failures but is otherwise eligible after correcting such failures, the agency shall provide benefits within 30 days after the application was filed or within 10 days of the date the interview was completed or the required verification is provided, whichever is later.

Denials

Denials shall be completed either as soon as the household fails to appear for an interview or fails to submit verification within the required time frame, or by the end of the current certification period or within 30 days after the date the application was filed as long as the household has had adequate time for providing the missing verification.

Verification - Verify the following:

Income

Allowable medical expenses

Allowable legally obligated child support payments, when any changes in the legal obligation to pay child support, the obligated amount, and the amount paid are reported or the information is questionable Utility expenses, when household chooses actual expenses Separate household status, if claimed by the household

Other information which is questionable shall be verified.

Different
Chapter I

Notices - Participating households which meet the "timely redetermination" time standards listed above shall be mailed an adequate notice of the agency action by the end of the household's current certification period.

Participating households which do not meet the timely redetermination time standards shall be mailed an adequate notice of agency action within 30 days after the date the redetermination form was filed.

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TANF Reference

CFR 273.17

Section: **FS-666-10**

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CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Different
Chap. I, Sec. F

Restoration of Lost Benefits

GENERAL RULE - Do not restore benefits more than twelve (12) months prior to the month the agency becomes aware of the underpayment or is notified of the reversal.

When an underpayment is identified, take action to restore benefits when:

- the underpayment was caused by the agency;
- a disqualification for intentional program violation is reversed, or special instructions state that a household is entitled to a restoration of lost benefits.

A household is entitled to restored benefits, even if it is not currently receiving FS.

Installments may be made to restore lost benefits. An accounting system for documenting entitlement to restored benefits and for recording the balance must be maintained.

A fair hearing may be requested when the client is dissatisfied.

In order to restore benefits

Determine the time period to be covered in the restoration.

1. Regardless of the time period of lost benefits, restoration cannot cover more than a twelve (12) month period. Restoration may be made
 - back to the date of application when erroneously denied.
 - back to the first month that benefits were not received when benefits were erroneously terminated.
 - for the months the household was underpaid.

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TANF Reference

CFR 273.17

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The difference between what the household received and what it should have received equals the amount to be restored.

2. Establish eligibility for each month's benefit separately.

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TANF or PaS Reference

CFR 273.17

Section: **FS-666-10**

CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Restoration of Lost Benefits

3. Subtract any amount owed the agency due to any previously established claim for overpayment, regardless of cause of overpayment.
4. If the household's membership has changed, restore the benefits to the household containing the majority of the household members at the time the error occurred. If this cannot be determined, restore benefits to the person who was the head of household at the time of the error.